

Winchester Parks and Recreation
Advisory Board Meeting
Monday, February 24, 2014
6:30pm

Meeting Location: Lord Fairfax Room, War Memorial Building

Present: Krista Farris (Chairwoman), John Bentley (Vice-Chairman), Jules Bacha, Matt Mintschenko, Kyle Homan, Shelly Lee and Rosie Schiavone

Absent: Brian Wigley and John Elliott

City Staff: Jennifer Jones, Lisa Hamaker and Doug Hewett

Media: Vic Bradshaw

Guests: None

Krista Farris called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

Approval of January 27, 2014 Minutes:

A motion was made by Kyle Homan to approve the January 27, 2014, minutes as presented, Jules Bacha seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Public Comments:

No Public Comments.

Chairwoman Comments: Krista Farris

No Comments

Skate Pavilion Discussion:

Jennifer Jones brought to the Advisory Board two areas of discussion concerning the future of the Skate Pavilion. One was the enforcement of the current helmet "requirement" and the ability to enforce the rule; the other was the fundraising and FY14 City minor capital fund for the facility.

She stated the department has only 5 full-time Park Maintenance staff and 1 part-time weekend staff (for 2 hours each weekend day) and the ability to enforce the helmet rule has become an unresolved issue. With \$21,500 to be fundraised and \$35,000 in City funds placed in the Parks and Recreation's FY14 budget a decision needs to be made whether to install new obstacles creating more skater participation without the ability to enforce the helmet rule or reallocate the City funds to another project. Jennifer Jones proposed the following thoughts:

- 1) Proceed with Fundraising
- 2) Change the rule from required to recommended
- 3) Re-visit the location; is the facility in the best area or should it be located near the BMX Track keeping the extreme sports together
- 4) Wait for the Needs Assessment to be completed
- 5) Is there interest in the school population
- 6) Scrap the entire project, suggested by John Elliott

Krista Farris asked what timeline the department had to use the money that had been allocated by the City. The money would need to be used by June 30, 2014 the end of the FY14 fiscal year unless the project was making great progress then the funding may be able to be moved forward.

Jennifer Jones reviewed a handout she created from a previous e-mail she had sent to Doug Hewett, Assistant City Manager; identifying the “helmet rule” issues and the ongoing occurrences of enforcing the rule. In the e-mail she gave three options stating the department’s position on the “helmet rule” being 1) change the wording from required helmets to recommended helmets; 2) send a letter to all 21 current users about the rule, identify the busiest time the facility is used; having staff take waivers to the pavilion during these times and hand them out, and finally reach out to the Police Department for resources; 3) hire a Skate Pavilion Attendant at about a \$20,000 expense to the department.

Doug Hewett commented the Skate Pavilion does fit a need but the concern with funding is how to move forward. The City is not really in favor of lessor enforcement; but by having the helmet requirement it does place the City on stance to enforce it.

Shelly Lee commented she has visited several other skate facilities and all of them are set up to “skate at your own risk”. She does feel that skaters should have a place in Jim Barnett Park but the Familyland location could be a bit more dangerous. She suggested the area near the BMX Track may be easier to supervise. She would like to still have the option to go into the schools to see what interest there may be.

Krista Farris shared the history of the current location being that the children were already skating under the pavilion and implementing the Skate Facility on the adjacent lot beside the BMX Track was going to be cost prohibitive. The pavilion provides a limited skating area; but was considered a good use of the space.

Jules Bacha commented that on John Handley Avenue in Williamsburg Heights skaters do have an unsupervised place to skate and without helmets. He suggested discontinuing the program in the Park.

John Bentley commented certain things are over organized in the Park system. He suggested the helmets be recommended verses required and refrain from investing anymore funding in the project. He also suggested finding an interest group to raise money. Krista Farris echoed the same thoughts of Mr. Bentley and Mr. Bacha.

Doug Hewett stated although he could not speak for City Council he felt Council had identified and had a real concern for safety. He does not believe City Council will support relaxing the helmet rule from required to recommended and said he would have those conversations with members of Council.

Matt Mintschenko stated helmets are required in Front Royal, VA and even if they are enforced people will find a way around using them. He also mentioned that fencing the area may help to police it.

Krista Farris suggested this was potentially a three step process 1) discussion with City Council on flexibility of the wording in the rules, 2) hold the school interest meetings and 3) refrain from reallocating the funding until the March Park Advisory Board meeting.

Recommendation: John Bentley made a recommendation to change one word from required to “recommended” for the helmet enforcement rule. Jules Bacha seconded the motion; the vote was unanimous.

Park Advisory Board Transition/Development: Jennifer Jones

Jennifer Jones reported she is planning a Park Advisory Board retreat around the 3rd week of June.

Anyone wishing to apply to become a member of the Park Advisory Board should visit the City's website for an application.

An appreciation reception will be held during the April Park Advisory Board's monthly meeting to honor the outgoing board members; (John Elliott and Krista Farris). Jules Bacha has accepted a second term and has achieved perfect attendance during his first term.

Director's Report: Jennifer Jones

- **Bridgeforth Field ADA-**

The concrete work is 100% complete and the restrooms are approximately 60% completed. The restrooms should be open by April 1. The ticket and souvenir booth should be completed by the 1st week in June.

- **Bridgeforth Field Artificial Turf-**

The bid document is to be out the 2nd week in March with the build date of August 20, 2014.

- **Cal Ripken World Series Update/ Yost Field Prep-**

Winchester Baseball will be using Yost Field as a game only field with no more than 200-400 hours of play before the Series takes place.

- **Winchester Community Gardens-**

The Winchester Community Gardens interest meeting was held at the Douglas Learning Center and approximately 24 were in attendance. The Boys and Girls Club spoke out against the location stating they had safety concerns with the proposed site so the pilot project was moved from Frederick Douglass Park to the alternate site at Timbrook Park. Michael Neese is collecting soil samples from Timbrook Park.

Flag Retirement Ceremony- May 17, 2014 3:00pm

The department along with various local military organizations will plan to retire the United States Flag at the POW/MIA in a special ceremony on Saturday, May 17, 2014 at 3:00pm. The flag will then be presented to the "By Dawn's Early Light" United States Flag Retirement Plaza in Allegheny County, PA for their Flag Day Retirement Ceremony in June. The request came to the department from plaza liaison, John Kovach, Jr. asking for a worn United States Flag that had flown over the POW/MIA Memorial to be included with their Annual Flag Retirement Ceremony. Julius E. Jones; Retired Colonel, US Army, has been very instrumental in the creation of the ceremony in Jim Barnett Park. Jennifer Jones invited Advisory Board members to attend and commented light refreshments will be served following the ceremony.

- **Needs Assessment RFQ-**

The Needs Assessment RFQ is back and two potential vendors have submitted quotes.

Greenplay, LLC \$49,995 and ETC Institute \$29,500. The proposals have been reviewed by Jennifer Jones, John Bentley and Tim Youmans; City Planning Director.

John Bentley, Park Advisory Board Vice-Chairman commented Greenplay, LLC will give expertise to Park needs and they were very specific to Winchester, providing a Gap Analysis and their proposal was more comprehensive. They can match program planning, CIP, needs of the community against national bench marks.

Jennifer Jones will check to see if a digital copy can be obtained from Greenplay, LLC and she may be able to provide a presentation at the next monthly Advisory Board meeting.

• **Community Day-Shawnee Springs-**

The scheduled Community Day with Shenandoah University is Tuesday, March 25. The clean-up site will be the Shawnee Springs trail. Jennifer Jones will be sending information out to Board members.

• **Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Presentation Summary-**

Jennifer Jones presented the department's "modifications to base budget for FY15" recently in a meeting with the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Finance Director and Assistant Finance Director.

Board Comments and Idea Sharing:

Refund Policy for Park Programs: John Bentley commented he was asked to review the department's refund policy. Upon the review; he found the policy to be a very "legal type" document that is not easily found on the Park website and he has asked if the policy can be brought back around for further review. Jennifer Jones commented the Park Director does not have the digression to deviate from the policy as written and signed off on by various levels of City Government.

Krista Farris commented it may be helpful to make customers more aware of the policy when they are signing up for programs.

John Bentley would like to see the refund policy become a well communicated policy that provides better customer service.

Jennifer Jones will e-mail a copy of the refund policy out to Board members for discussion at the March Advisory Board meeting.

World Series 2014 Update- Lisa Hamaker

- 1) Hotel rooms have been reserved with 5 teams expected to stay in the city and 4 teams in the county.
- 2) To date, \$31,000 has been received in sponsorship but the department is still searching for a Title Sponsor.
- 3) The Winchester Star will be starting to publish a series of articles on the event.
- 4) Teams will arrive in Winchester August 7 or 8th with games starting August 9th.

Program Update- Lisa Hamaker

- 1) Seeing an increase in program registrations.
- 2) Aquatic programs have increased
- 3) The Cupcake and Thai Cooking classes have received good reviews.
- 4) Over ½ of the offered Athletic programs have taken place.
- 5) The Android and I-Phone workshops have been received well.
- 6) Tourism has had success with the Trolley Tour and the Historic Geocaching Event
- 7) Saturday, April 12 the department will be holding the Annual Easter Egg Hunt, the Egg Splash and the Spring Fling Dance if Board members are interested in helping out.

Krista Farris commented that the Advisory Board may want to re-visit being a fundraising body and new members should be made aware this is expected of them.

Advisory Board Meeting Dates:

Advisory Board Meeting: Monday, March 24, 2014 @ 6:30pm

Adjournment: With no further business to discuss Krista Farris asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting; Shelly Lee made the motion and it was seconded by Matt Mintshcenko. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

Respectfully submitted; Jennifer Stotler; Park Administrative Coordinator